

Guardian

Volume 11, Issue 8

Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Brigade (East)

December 15th, 2004

Lancer Spur Ride



DRIVE SAFE!



No matter where you are or what your mission...

Safety First!

This message brought to you by Task Force Falcon Command Information

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December 15th, 2004

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PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN



PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

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On the Cover:

Pfc. Joseph Kinsworthy from B Troop, 2-107th Cavalry crawls through the mud during TF Lancer's Spur Ride event.

COVER PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JEFFREY DURAN

Merry Christmas from Brig. Gen. Carmony

Soldiers of Multi-National Brigade (East), I just want to thank everyone for the great job you are doing. In this complex peace enforcement environment, the Soldiers of this brigade are making a difference in our sector and helping the people of Kosovo every day. When people who have not been to Kosovo for awhile come to our sector they, immediately notice things are better. Marine Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, noticed that more houses had roofs, more cars were on the road and more planes were landing at the airport—all signs of life improving. These changes are hard to notice on a day-to-day basis, but they are happening thanks to the hard work of our brigade and others.

The holiday season is upon us, and for many this may be their first Christmas away from loved ones. While our families cannot be replaced, everyone should remember their military family and plan to have a special Christmas with them. I have always been impressed with the ideas Soldiers come up with in deployed situations. Here on Camps Bondsteel and Monteith, with the help of the great MWR folks, there are many activities planned for the holiday season. Plan to get together with your friends and teammates for several MWR activities, or plan some of your own. Make a memory that you will treasure for many years to come. Try to include everyone on the team—no one likes to be left out at Christmas.

One of the best ways to make a memory is to help someone who is less fortunate. Simple toys, food, medical care or warm clothes can make a big difference in a child's life, and compared to the people here, our countries and our people are truly blessed. Many Soldiers are helping with various charitable projects, but in an area with so many needs, there is always room for people to help others. If you are unsure how to get involved, see your chaplain, and if you know of an unfortunate situation among the local people, please tell your chain of command or chaplain so they may help. The best Christmas present of all is a child's smile!

Most important of all, let us stay safe during this holiday season. The winter weather is upon us, and everything is slippery. Take your time, plan extra time for travel so you do not have to hurry, and drive defensively.

Holiday decorations also need to be turned off when you leave the room or go to sleep. We are all living in crowded conditions, so extra care is needed.

From Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Dillon and me, Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year! ★

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Guardian

Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Brigade (East)

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Quicktime

myPay Website Helps With Taxes

The end of the calendar year is quickly approaching and that means only one thing in the tax world: tax statements (W-2, 1099R). The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has compiled a schedule of dates when service members, military retirees and annuitants and defense civilian employees can access their tax statements through myPay, and when they can anticipate to receive the hardcopy delivery by mail. Military members will once again have access to view, save and print their tax statements from myPay at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. DFAS delivers personal pay information and provides the ability to process pay-related transactions timely, safely and securely to all its members through myPay. The web-based system eliminates the risks associated with postal delivery by allowing members to access electronic tax statements and other financial information online.



MYPAY WEBSITE LOCATED AT [HTTP://MYPAY.DFAS.MIL](http://MYPAY.DFAS.MIL)

The myPay website gives service members to access all their financial information, including tax forms, leave and earnings statements, and travel pay information.

Army Updates Sexual Assault Policy

New Army guidance on sexual assault prevention and response was released Nov. 12, and will be included in the upcoming revision of AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, in 2005.

The new guidance is one of several steps the Army has recently taken to re-emphasize that any offense of sexual assault is inconsistent with Army Values and Warrior Ethos, officials said.

In addition to the new policy guidance for commanders, the Army has launched a sexual assault prevention Web site at <http://www.sexualassault.army.mil>, to promote steps leaders and Soldiers at all levels can take to prevent and respond to instances of potential sexual assault. Included in this Web site are links to training materials developed by Train-

ing and Doctrine Command. Sexual assault prevention training will be part of initial entry training, semi-annual training, installation in-processing and pre-deployment training for all Soldiers.

The Web site also includes links to additional resources for victims of sexual assault, and a checklist for commanders to help the recovery of sexual assault victims. The newly launched Sexual Assault Web site and incorporation of the new Army guidance into AR 600-20 reinforces Army leadership's ongoing commitment to ensuring that adequate prevention programs and policies are in place, said Col. Paris Mack, chief, Human Factors Division, Human Resources & Policy Directorate, G-1. For more information, see <http://www.military.com>.

Free Shipping Materials

The U.S. Postal Service is offering a package of free packing materials, including 10 boxes, 10 customs forms with envelopes, 10 "Mili-Pac" shipping envelopes, and a roll of Priority Mail tape. To order the kit, call (800) 610-8734 and request Care Kit 4. The Postal Service will ship it by Priority Mail. Although the packing materials are free, shippers must still pay normal postage costs. The U.S. Postal Service and Military Postal Service work hand in hand to support troops deployed all over the world. Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, more than 650 dedicated contract flights have carried mail to the region, and the Postal Service continues to send a 747-series freighter of military mail to Southwest Asia every day.



PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

(Above) Piles of illegal weapons await destruction, while in the background Norwegian and Greek soldiers do their parts in destroying the weapons. (Below) Pvt. Nikolaos Halkidis from the 506th Mechanized Infantry Battalion removes the wood stock from a rifle.

Destroying Weapons is Team Effort

The Connex was piled with hundreds of automatic and semi-automatic weapons, ranging in age from the Gulf War to the World War II era: Thompson submachine guns, AK-47s, SKS assault rifles, pistols, shotguns, and even a couple German MG-42s. This collection of weapons was historic, and it would have made a great addition to any gun collector's museum if they weren't illegal.

Greek, American and Norwegian Soldiers worked together to destroy these illegal weapons Nov. 24th through 26th. The process began when military police Soldiers from past rotations slowly built up a store of illegal weapons that had been seized during various types of searches. The approximately 700 weapons destroyed during the three days had been stockpiled since about

the year 2000, and none of them had been collected during the current rotation, said Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Snoddy from the Joint Law Enforcement Liaison Team.

Destroying the weapons was a step-by-step process. First, the weapons were transported from Camp Bondsteel to Rigas Fereos, home to the Greek 506th Mechanized Infantry Battalion. There, Greek soldiers began removing wood, plastic, and other non-metallic parts from the weapons, said Capt. Trifon Argiratos, the Greek officer in charge of the operation.

Next, Norwegian soldiers used cutting wheels and torches to slice the metal parts into smaller pieces. These metal pieces were loaded into a truck and transported to a metal factory near Janjevo/Janjeve, where the metal was



PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

By Spc. Adam Dielschneider



PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

(Above) A Norwegian soldier uses a torch to cut the barrel of a heavy machine gun. (Below) The metal parts were melted down at a metal factory.



PHOTO BY SGT. MITROPOULOS CHRISTOS

completely melted down.

The purpose of this type of mission is to ensure that the illegal weapons seized by KFOR soldiers can never again be used to cause harm, said Argiratos.

Though the weapons had already been disabled by welding the barrels shut before being put into storage, a skilled gunsmith may have been able to repair the weapons to a functional state, or the weapon could be stripped for parts to repair other weapons, said Snoddy. In this case, it is better to completely destroy the weapon.

While some would argue that a piece of history was destroyed during those few days, it was yet another step towards making Kosovo a safer place for everyone, citizen and Soldier alike.

Smile and wave to the whole family

*Video teleconferencing lets you see
and talk to a whole room full of
people at once.*



Sgt. 1st Class Regan O'Bryan from 629th MI Co. uses the VTC unit in the Southtown recreation center.

PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

It's a given that you're missing your family about now. It's the holiday season and you're far away from home. Maybe you're annoyed with the slow, choppy video of the webcams as you chat with your loved ones on the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) computers. Or maybe you are just plain sick of using the phones.

Want yet another option? Check out a communication tool that combines the best of both telephone and webcam technology. This third option is called video teleconferencing or VTC, and it's a free service available from MWR.

The actual VTC unit is an electronic device that sits on top of a large TV and contains a video camera, microphone, and a special dial-up modem. To use the VTC unit, you simply turn it on, dial up the destination number, and you are ready to talk. Of course the MWR staff is ready to help you get your VTC session set up, so you don't have to worry about any of that technical stuff.

VTC has many benefits over webcams, which are readily available in the MWR computer labs. Though easy to use, the webcams usually have an inherent delay in the image. The frame rate of the webcam image is usually

quite low, so the video is very choppy. VTC improves on both of these problems by allowing better video quality and less delay.

Privacy is another big advantage of VTC over webcams. Once the system is set up and the connection has been established between the two units, MWR staff can leave the room and leave you to talk to your spouse or parents in total privacy for up to two hours. Plus, VTC can allow you to talk to your entire family at once, as long as they all fit in the same room.

In order for a VTC to work, it has to dial the number for a compatible unit back in the states, which is how you see your friends and your friends see you. Most VTC units are compatible with each other, but in rare cases, such as when trying to dial to a secure-line unit, there could be problems. However, VTCs are generally easy to find, as many military installations are equipped with them.

On the rare occasion that you encounter problems when trying to talk to your loved ones using VTC, MWR has specially trained contractors available that can troubleshoot on site.

Setting up a VTC session takes a little work, because the planning must be done in advance. MWR recommends

letting them know about your plans at least two weeks in advance. The first step is to find a military installation that is within reasonable distance of the family members you want to talk to. Then find the installation's VTC dialing number. This is a key step, because without that number, a connection can't be established.

Next, make an appointment with the installation to reserve the VTC unit for the date and time you want to make the call.

Once you have a time reserved for both MWR and the stateside installation and your family can make it to the session, you are ready to go.

Some people say that using VTC is the closest thing to actually being in the same room with the people you miss the most. Even after all the planning and arrangements, the experience is well worth it.

So make a few calls, find a time that works for you and your family, and enjoy this great free service. During the holidays, it's the closest you'll get to home. ★



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Printers, paper and picoliters, oh my!

Photo printers allow you to turn your digital pictures into something you can stick to your refrigerator.



The Camp Bondsteel PX has several options for those looking to buy a photo printer.

PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

So you've got a digital camera, and the photos it takes are great. But if you're like many – the lure of traditional prints that you can give to friends and family is hard to ignore. Back home, a number of retailers offer digital print-making services. For a price that's comparable to traditional film processing, you can hand them some cash and come away with a fistful of glossy 5x7 prints to adorn your refrigerator with.

That's a little tough to do here in Kosovo though. With that in mind, the next step for most digital photography aficionados is to start looking at inkjet printers.

Much like digital cameras, when shopping for inkjet printers the unfortunate rule of thumb is that you get what you pay for. Most major brands, such as HP, Canon and Epson, put out some great full-size printers in the \$80-200 range.

The problem is these cheaper models give mediocre results at best. Regardless of your budget, the best bet is to be as informed as possible before you go shopping. What we'll try to do here is give you a fighting chance at

interpreting the jargon. That way you can come away with the best deal you can afford and not feel ripped off.

Inkjet printers are rated either by resolution, picoliter size or both. Resolution is the number of dots per square inch that the printer is capable of putting to paper. Dots per square inch are commonly referred to as "dpi." A picoliter is the size of the ink droplet on the page. Now, before you think that you've got this part licked – keep in mind that you can have two printers made by two different companies (which claim to have the same resolution) that produce drastically different quality prints. A lot of this has to do with the software drivers each model uses, as well as the proprietary technology each uses in its print engine. The best bet when shopping resolutions is to run a test print through each system and see what you get.

The next thing to look at is ink. Probably the greatest hidden cost in making your own prints is found the first time your inkwell goes dry. Simply put, ink is expensive, and you burn through a lot of it when you're printing

photos. The most common printers use a two-cartridge system, which include a single cartridge for black and one for color. Between the two you can expect to pay between \$50 and \$75 dollars to completely replace both inks as they run dry. In many cases, it is almost cheaper to buy a new printer than to replace the ink. If you've ever wondered how printer companies can afford to charge so little for their hardware, you've likely just been clued in to how they manage it.

A better solution than the single or dual cartridge system is the multi-cartridge systems that utilize between five and eight mini-inkwells. Though printers that use this technology are often more expensive to initially purchase, they tend to make up for their price point when it comes time to replace your first inkwell. This has to do with how the printers mix inks to make different colors. With the multi-well systems, you end up only having to replace the one or two colors most commonly used in mixing. The cost per inkwell in these systems is often

See *PRINTERS*, page 23

Physical fitness made simple

Passing the Army Physical Fitness Test is as simple as remembering the basics and sticking with them.

The key to passing the sit-up event is developing your hip flexor muscles by doing flutter kicks, leg lifts, and sit-ups.



PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN

How fit are you? Physical fitness is important to anyone wanting to live a longer and more productive life, but to soldiers it goes beyond that. Maintaining our fitness is a duty and could mean the difference between life and death for us.

There are many paths to fitness, depending on whether you want to focus on cardiovascular, muscular strength, muscular endurance, or just flexibility. Ideally, each person should incorporate each of these facets into any routine to achieve balanced fitness. For soldiers, our "super bowl" is the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), which gives the Army a good snapshot of your total fitness. For some, this day is a light workout, and they head off to the shower after maxing yet another APFT. But for the other 90 percent of us, there is usually room for improvement.

For the past five years, I have worked at a juvenile boot camp as a senior drill instructor. One of my duties is to ensure that when my privates graduate the four-month program, they are physically fit. And while there's no "one size fits all" method for maxing the physical fitness test, I have noticed several techniques which work better than others. So, forget about special shoes, breath-right strips, or supplements. If you want real results, it's time to get back to basics.

Push-ups: This is the easiest event for most to max, and a great measurement of the balance between strength and endurance. Weight training can augment your workout, but will not suffice on its own, no matter what you bench press. Why? Because the push-up also requires you to use stabilizing muscles, which can only be developed by—you guessed it—doing push-ups. So the key here is repetition.

"I usually knock out 50 push-ups and sit-ups each night before I go to bed," says Sgt. 1st Class Tyler Thompson, Area Support Team Falcon, who has worked as a drill sergeant for more than 10 years. "This sets a baseline so that my body doesn't even start to work on the APFT until I've done at least 50."

You should also throw some variety in by doing close-arm, normal, and wide-arm push-ups. I usually max push-ups, and what has worked for me is to do as many as possible in the normal position, and then slide my hands out to a wider position where the chest can do most of the work.

Sit-ups: Just like the bodybuilder who can't pass push-ups, there are people with "six-pack" abdominals who can barely pass sit-ups. The reason is that you also recruit the hip flexor muscles when you do a sit-up. Keeping this in mind, I add the roman chair to my

workout, and I also do a lot of flutter kicks and some leg lifts. Again these supplement actual sit-ups. It's also good to do some form sit-ups, where you come down slowly and breathe in, then come up quickly as you exhale.

2-Mile Run: This event is the hardest to max for the majority of soldiers. While I can train most anyone to max push-ups and sit-ups within a couple of months, the run is the least-maxed event, and the most-failed. My suggestion for the run is to attack it in steps, and chart your progress. Start out weeks in advance by improving your half-mile time. After a few runs, focus in on your 1-mile time. As your time decreases, you can increase your distance. Running farther does not necessarily make you a better runner on the APFT. It does increase your cardiovascular and muscular endurance, but you'll often just fall off at the end of your two-mile, because your body isn't used to maximum effort on that eighth lap.

Variety can also help. Thompson stated that soldiers' run times often improved after coming in from a field training exercise because, even though they hadn't run in days, they had been marching a lot with rucksacks on their backs.

Also, be sure to breathe in through
See *HEALTH*, page 23

What Makes the Army: Soldiers



PHOTO COURTESY OF SGT. JETTIE SILVA

The Army becomes a part of many Soldiers' lives. There are many reasons that Soldiers separate from the military, yet many find after they have separated that they miss the part of their lives that the Army provided. Sgt. Jettie Silva is one such Soldier.

Why did you join the Army?

I joined the Army for a couple of reasons. I was in JROTC for four years and I loved it. At the spring camps we did rope bridges, rappelling, and obstacle courses. It was a very exciting experience, so I joined the Army Reserve when I was 17 years old. I stayed in for six years, got out for seven, and then I got back in about two years ago. The seven-year break was way too long though.

I also joined because of my father. He is a retired Special Forces sergeant major, and he has always inspired me to follow in his footsteps, so I did, at least part time, by joining the Reserves.

Have you always been in Civil Affairs?

No, I haven't. I was finance for five years and military intelligence for one year before I got out. When I came back in, I knew how the system worked, and I knew that Civil Affairs seemed exciting to me—it is a special operations force, so there are a lot of different things that we do compared to other units. I decided that if I couldn't come back in Civil Affairs, I didn't want to come back at all. Now here I am.

Why did you want to go into Civil Affairs?

When I lived in Fort Bragg I met a couple of people who were Civil Affairs

and Psychological Operations, and it just seemed to me to be an exciting opportunity. They are both special operations forces, so they do things like annual water tests and road marches, and they are expected to perform better at other things like the APFT and weapons qualification. It sounded like something that I wanted to do and push myself.

Also, CA is a very people-oriented job and I just love to work with people, and

Name: Jettie Wailani Silva
Date of Birth: Jan. 20, 1972
Hometown: Kaneohe, HI; lives in Lakewood, WA
MOS: 38A, Civil Affairs Specialist
Hobbies: Hiking, Camping, Reading, Singing
College: BA in Criminal Justice from Central Washington University

it seemed a better fit for me than going back into finance or something like that.

What was/is your job in Kosovo?

Our primary job as a team in Kamenica is to work with the municipality. Our area of operations includes Kamenica, Novo Brdo, and Vitina. We go to all their decision-making meetings to ensure that the decisions they are making are fair to all the ethnicities in the

community. We go to their board of directors meetings, assembly meetings, and security meetings, just to name a few. We make sure that as they present budgets, an appropriate percentage of the budget goes to all the ethnicities in the community. We also make sure that projects get done for all the different ethnic groups as well, whether it's for road improvements or school projects.

We also play a big part in gathering and distributing humanitarian assistance. We have to create project folders as well. A project folder is where you look at the needs of the community and put together an analysis of what needs to be done. For example I did a playground project where I had to go to a school and find out what playground equipment they needed. Then I had to go get quotes for equipment costs, asphalt costs, and things like that. I get a lot of help from the municipal people on these things. Then I submit the project folder to higher headquarters to actually receive the funding. We've had pretty good success so far. We have done two playgrounds as well as the Kololec road project.

With all the different projects you've done, what have been a couple of the highlights of your deployment?

See SILVA, page 22

Bradley Crews Hone Skills

Story by Sgt. Benjamin Hokkanen

Teamwork is essential to getting things done in the Army. Working well together as a team is even more vital to mission success.

The crews of an M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle know that teamwork is the only way to accomplish their mission, as they demonstrated on the Falcon Four Range while getting out and firing their Bradleys.

"Everybody's a team," said Spc. Jeremy Martin, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1-118th Infantry, winner of Charlie Company's Top Gun award for this trip out to the range. "I may be the gunner and I may have to kill the targets, but I have a Bradley Commander (BC) who has to do his job and a driver who has to do his job so we can be successful. Like on an offensive engagement, the driver has to be able to give you a good, steady platform to fire from; he can't be jerking around on the wheel. The BC has to be able to call out the proper fire commands, proper ammo selection, and distance. It's not just up to the gunner. I may be doing the shooting and knocking the targets down, but everyone in the Bradley can affect the score. It's a whole crew effort."

It took the whole company working together to be able to run the range, too. Company C, 1-118th Infantry did everything at the range internally, from running the communications to performing the crew evaluations, said Sgt. Brandon Pye, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1-118th Infantry.

"There was a lot of work we had to do before we even got to go out to the range," said Pye, who finished as one of the top three gunners in the company. "There's Bradley Gunnery Skill Training (BGST), which is like CTT for the gun system. We had to get certified at Camp Monteith in taking the gun apart, uploading the feeder, and loading the ammo into the Bradley before we got out on the live range. We get the drivers involved too, because it's a total crew effort out there in a Bradley. We also have a virtual trainer that we sent crews through just to sort of get them back into the gunnery mindset. We also had to get our Bradley crew evaluators certified for out at the range. Usually when we go out we have active duty evaluators who come out and do the evaluations and after action reviews, but here we had to do all that internally, so that was kind of new for us."

Soldiers from Charlie Company were able to learn many things from this training experience, complete with its own Kosovo twist.

Continued on page 14

(Upper Right) An M2A2 Bradley vehicle moves into position at the firing range to begin the live-fire training. (Far Right) Bradley operators keep an eye on the firing range from the top of their vehicle. (Right) Ammunition for the main gun and machine gun lies next to a Bradley vehicle before the training begins.





PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES



PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES



PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

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GUARDIAN



PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES



PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN

(Top) A glowing round streaks from a Bradley's main gun during the live fire. (Above) Bradley crew members communicate with each other by radio during a break in the live-fire training.

Continued from page 12

"I had to learn to manually index what the range to the target was," said Martin. "I'd never indexed to find the range; I've always used the Bell Rift range finder, so that was really good training. Going back and learning how to do it that way was good in case we are ever in combat and my Bell Rift goes out on me. It

was also good training here for a lot of gunners, because back home the terrain is much more flat, unlike all the hills of Kosovo."

Pye had his own training points he took away from the experience.

"Being an evaluator was new for me, but I was able to learn a lot from it," Pye said. "I got to see how different crews do

things differently. It really gets down to the black and white of things too, because I had to know what is a 'Go' and what is a 'No-Go.' I also got to understand the times people have to engage and disengage the target. The exposure times are based on the distance of the target, what kind of target it is and any other conditions put on that particular target. Seeing how all that was figured out was new to me, because all I ever knew was I had X amount of time to go up, kill the target and then come back. I never knew how they got to that number X until I went through this course. So all that was pretty neat, and I think that

it was a good experience for me.

"It was also different to do this training here because we had to have the Kiowa (helicopters) come and clear the range every morning, which is something we never have to do at Fort Stewart (on normal annual trainings), because there

See BRADLEY, page 22

Spur of the Moment

Story by Spc. Ian Blake

From out of the darkness on a cloudy morning comes a lone individual cresting the top of Radar Hill on Camp Bondsteel. Smeared in sweat and camouflage paint, the heavy load on his back doing little to impede his progress, he makes it to the top of the hill. Waiting for him at the crest are a group of stalwart figures topped in wide-brimmed hats, congratulating the Soldier as he comes to a stop. This hard-working individual was the first one to complete the twelve-mile ruck march, one of many challenges

Continued on next page

Staying focused on the road ahead, Spc. Joseph Fought, C Troop, 2-107th Cavalry, takes part in the road march portion of the TF Lancer Spur Ride.

PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE

December 15th, 2004

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PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JEFFREY DURAN

Continued from previous page

presented as part of 2-107th Cavalry, Task Force Lancer's Spur Ride.

The Spur Ride is a tradition that dates back to the eras of knights-errant, where only those select few could wear the spurs of a rider. It is a tradition that has been at the heart of the U.S. Army cavalry since its inception. What is at stake for those involved in the march are their spurs—a traditional symbol of the cavalry—and a squadron coin, as well as a Stetson hat for the Soldier to finish the ruck march before anyone else, including the task force command sergeant major. The hat, adorned by brass rank and cavalry insignia, is a fine prize that isn't worn by many in the cavalry.

Not all cavalry Soldiers were eligible to participate in the Spur Ride, since TF Lancer had revised the tradition into a more demanding format, said TF Lancer Command Sgt. Maj. William Belding. For a Soldier to participate, they had to score a minimum of 70 in each event on the Army Physical Fitness Test and had to qualify with a minimum of sharpshooter with their assigned weapon. After meeting these qualifications, they could participate.

The Spur Ride traditionally consists of tasks related to scouting and counter-reconnaissance, but for this Spur Ride,

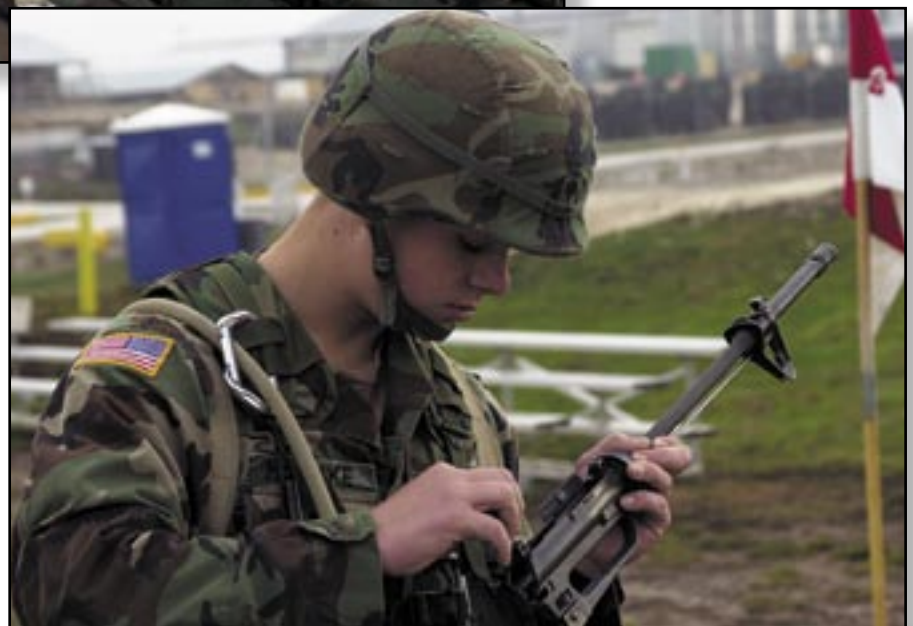
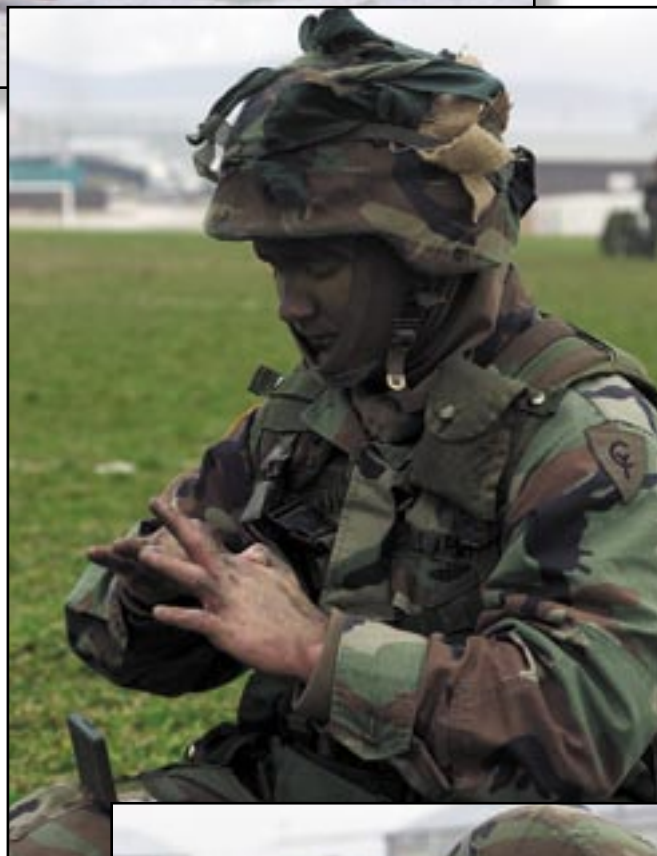
the 30 Soldiers of TF Lancer were tested in the more common warrior task training skills. Among those tasks were map reading, land navigation, basic first aid, camouflage application, and weapons cleaning.

The tests were not all technical, nor were they all physical. The second phase of the Spur Ride was a written test over cavalry history. With a past steeped in history and tradition, the test covered the foundations of the cavalry, the history of the cavalry up through World War II, and how it has changed since then.

"The history test gave the spur ride a traditional outlook," said Sgt. John Broughton, A Troop 2-107th Cavalry, TF Lancer. Broughton was among the 17 Soldiers that passed the written test and moved on to the spur ride's main event, the ruck march.

Starting early in the drizzling rain of a Sunday morning, the Soldiers gathered outside TF Lancer's tactical operations center to have their rucksacks and equipment weighed. Soldiers had to carry a minimum of 35 pounds. To make weight, some filled their packs with traditional items like entrenching tools, and body armor, while some simply resorted to using rocks.

The march route took the Soldiers out gate three on Camp Bondsteel, proceeding on that road until



PHOTOS CENTER AND BOTTOM BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JEFFREY DURAN

(Opposite page top) Sgt. John Broughton, A Troop, 2-107th Cavalry, plots a course on a map during the Spur Ride's Warrior Task Training. (Opposite page center) Pfc. Curtis Hamrick, A Troop, 2-107th Cavalry, applies camouflage paint to his face during the Spur Ride. (Opposite page bottom) Spc. Scott Mahnke, C Troop, 2-107th Cavalry cleans his weapon during the Spur Ride. (Above) After cleaning their weapons, Soldiers from 2-107th Cavalry crawl through the mud during the Warrior Task Training stage of the Spur Ride. (Below left) Spc. Jonathan Janisse, Troop C, 2-107th Cavalry, takes a well-deserved rest after finishing the 12-mile ruck march. (Below right) Sgt. Jonathan Ponzer, A Troop, 2-107th Cavalry, keeps a steady pace during the ruck march.

reaching Rigas Fereos, base of the 506th Mechanized Infantry Battalion. They made a lap of the base's long, muddy driveway, then continued to route Hawk.

At an intersection in the road, the Soldiers turned around and returned to Camp Bondsteel. After clearing their weapons at the gate, they completed one loop of the base's perimeter road, ending with a march up the infamous "Radar

Hill."

With only three hours to complete this arduous task, the Soldiers did their best to meet the goal to gain their spurs. As they approached the finish line atop of the hill, leadership from across TF Lancer was present—including TF Lancer Commander Lt. Col. John Harris. He attended, along with a multitude of lieutenants and first sergeants, to encourage his troops to the end. The first Soldier to cross the finish line was Spc. Jonathan Janisse, C Troop, 2-107th Cavalry.

When asked about the spur march, Janisse said, "It was worth it. It takes a lot of dedication."

This event, although a tradition in the Army, has a past that predates medieval times and transcends national borders.

"In order to become a knight, you had to be a spur holder," said Sgt. Jody Passeno, C Troop,



PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE

2-107th Cavalry, and a spur holder himself. "These were the elite, professional warriors of the day. The Romans also had their spur holders—generally they were centurions, and it was their rite of passage to join the regular Roman army from their training cadres. The British and the French passed that tradition on to their warrior elite, who were mostly officers. These people would make the policies and decide the rules of warfare, making it a requirement that you be a spur holder in order to make the rules."

See *SPURS*, page 23



PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES



Waiting behind the starting line at Olaf Rye, service members from over twenty nations prepare to star the 25 km ruck march.

Cav 'Hoofs It' on the Dancon

Story and Photos by Spc. Ian Blake

The chilling wind of an early November morning whips through the jostling mass of people behind a line of yellow ribbon. They await the moment when the ribbon will be cut and they can start on their way. Among their number are a host of different fatigue styles, ranging from the traditional jungle pattern to the sandy brown and tan of desert fatigues. Almost as numerous are the more than 20 languages speaking excitedly of what is about to happen. But near the rear stands a group of Soldiers, loaded to the brim with their rucksacks, load-bearing equipment, and their weapons in hand. These rugged individuals are Soldiers from the 2-107th Cavalry, Task Force Lancer, and they have come to compete in the Dancon Ruck March, hosted at Olaf Rye, a base operated by the Danish.

More than 1,300 service men and women from more than 20 countries, as well as the Kosovo Police Service, took part in the 25-km. ruck march that would

take them through rural and urban areas of the Kosovo landscape. Starting at 8:30 a.m., the contestants had eight hours to complete the arduous course with a minimum of 10 kilograms on their backs. Some nations packed their weapons in their packs and competed that way. But with everything they had on them, the Soldiers from TF Lancer carried at least half more than the required load.

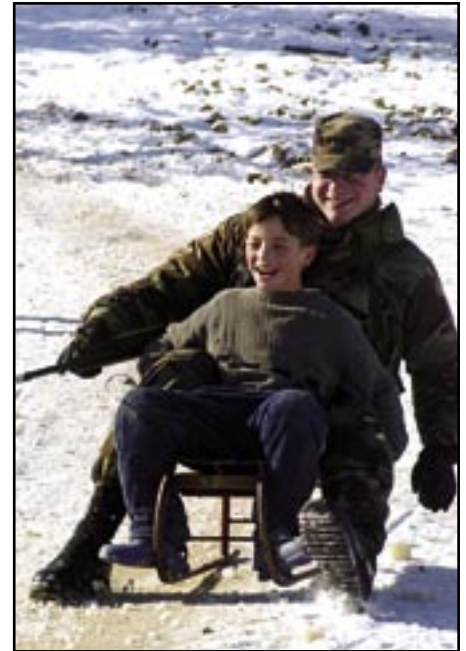
The course took the participants through a variety of terrains, ranging from dirt country roads to hardtop asphalt.

Having recently snowed, the trail was either icy or wet, which was an extra challenge for the competitors. It also added to the difficulty in climbing one of the course's hills. Several Soldiers from Lancer commented about slipping and falling on their fourth point of contact during the arduous climb. The only major injury during the course of the event was suffered by a Pakistani soldier who fell on his arm, requiring him to be

evacuated by ambulance.

Those contestants who triumphed over the hill were treated to a number of pleasures. First, the gently winding slopes offered some relief for the weary trekkers. The breathtaking view of the snow and tree-covered valley offered the contestants a rare chance to see the beauty that Kosovo possesses. And probably the most welcome pleasure was the tables offering free fruit and vegetable slices and bottled water for the hungry, thirsty competitors. But these could not detract from the bigger prize: the knowledge that they had just completed about three-fourths of the course. It was, literally, all down hill from there.

The first person to cross the hilltop was a Danish soldier, followed by members of the French military. TF Lancer's 1st Lt. Andrew Wagner, Troop A 2-107th Cavalry, was the first American to cross the hilltop and to complete the course, winning himself a prize of \$10 American for his efforts.



“The march was fun, especially the really big hills,” Wagner said. “It was great meeting interesting people from other countries.”

Not all of the Americans fared as well as Wagner did. The last contestant to finish the march was Master Sgt. Eugene Young, Headquarters Headquarters Troop, TF Lancer. Even after all the other competitors had loaded up into their buses, this Soldier was determined to complete the course. Through a sudden hazard of blowing snow and slippery roads, he completed the full course by walking through the front gate of Olaf Rye.

But success did not come from the encouragement of his fellow Soldiers alone. On more than one occasion, Young was either encouraged or physically helped by contestants from the other nations.

“At the beginning of the course I came across an Italian soldier who was having trouble walking across the icy road, so I helped him up,” said Young. “Then a little ways on I slipped, and he helped me up. This went on for a while.”

Throughout the race, no matter what language they spoke or which nation they represented, as they passed by they would encourage him to finish the course, said Young.

In the end every one of the Soldiers of TF Lancer completed the arduous course, receiving their certificate of completion. Although they were carrying more than anyone else, that did not stop them from succeeding in their goal. And besides, how many people actually volunteer to go on a ruck march?

(Above left) A Danish medical armored vehicle stands ready at a mid-point on the hilltop. (Above right) During a lag in the action, a Soldier from TF Lancer sleds with a local boy on a homemade sled during the Dancon ruck march route. (Below) Crossing the hilltop point, 1st Lt. Andrew Wagner, Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry, is the first American to cross that point on the route.



Christmas traditions in Kosovo

Christians from both Serbian and Albanian ethnicities celebrate Christmas in a variety of ways.



Christmas trees, like the one on Camp Bondsteel's Chapel Hill, are a tradition for the people of Kosovo as well as the Soldiers of KFOR.

PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

As the holiday season nears I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a little information on the local holiday season as it applies to Christmas. Kosovo is made up of a rich collage of ethnic groups and religions, and often a fascinating overlap occurs between these groups. The month of December is full of religious significance for numerous faiths, primarily for those celebrating Christmas.

Often people are not sure if and how Christmas is celebrated in Kosovo given that the majority of Kosovo's population is made up of Muslims that do not celebrate one of Christianity's central holy days. These ethnic groups that are of the Muslim faith include Turks, Roma, Ashkali, Bosniacs and Gorani.

The largest ethnic group in Kosovo is the ethnic Albanians who are typically either Muslim or Roman Catholic. The Muslims of Kosovo recognize the importance of their neighbor's Christian holidays, and likewise, the Christians

of Kosovo recognize the importance of Islamic holy days such as Ramadan and Fitr Bajram. Religion and ethnicity in Kosovo are not synonymous. So while the Muslims of Kosovo do not celebrate Christmas as a religious event, Christmas is very much celebrated in Kosovo.

The largest two groups of Christians found in Kosovo are Christian Orthodox Serbs and Roman Catholic Albanians. There is also a small number of Roman Catholic Croatians and other smaller ethnic groups that adhere to either Roman Catholicism or Christian Orthodoxy. Among the various ethnic groups in Kosovo that belong to the Christian faith, the focus of this note will be the Albanians and Serbs. However, both celebrate Christmas on different dates.

You will recall from previous Guardian articles that Christian holy days will fall on different days depending on whether the Julian or Gregorian calendar is used. The Roman Catholic

Albanians celebrate Christmas following the same calendar we do. And so on December 24th, Midnight Mass will be held in Roman Catholic churches throughout the province, followed by Christmas Mass on Christmas day traditionally held at 11 am.

Albanians refer to Christmas as *Kërsbëndellat* or *Krishtlindjet*. It is not uncommon to find numerous Albanian Muslims present in the Catholic Churches during Midnight Mass throughout Kosovo. This tradition goes back many years and is illustrative of the way religion figures into the lives of the Albanians.

Religion does not play a major role in identity formation among the Albanians. Religion is a rather private affair not to be confused with ethnicity. Most Kosovo Albanians trace their religious heritage back to the Roman Catholic Church, whereas in the case of Albania proper the further south one moves the more contact one will make with Albanian Orthodox Christians. Just as

the Serbian Orthodox Church is Autocephalous, that is to say independent or national, so is the Albanian Orthodox Church.

It is important to understand that conversions to Islam in the Balkans were a result of over 500 years of Ottoman administration within the Ottoman Empire. It was during the later parts of the 18th and 19th centuries that most conversions from Christianity to Islam occurred throughout various places on the Balkan Peninsula under the control of the Ottomans, as is the case in places like Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and so forth. It is because of this interesting odyssey that the Muslims of Southeastern Europe are typically characterized as secular and/or non-practicing relative to Muslims of the Middle East.

Albanian Christians (Roman Catholic and Albanian Orthodox) and Albanian Muslims are more than happy to celebrate the various religious holidays together. They view themselves as Albanians based on linguistics, common history, and culture. It is not odd to come across people that have both religions in their family.

Serbs refer to Christmas as *Bozic*. The Serbians of Kosovo are exclusively Orthodox Christian. Religion for the Serbs is a central part of identity. There is an old saying that says, "you are Orthodox because you are a Serb, and so you are Serb because you are Orthodox." This is one of the major differences among Serbs and Albanians in terms of the role of religion relative to identity.

The Orthodox Christians use the Julian calendar. The date of Christmas Eve is Jan. 6th, and Christmas Day is on the 7th. There are various Christmas traditions for the Serbs that require the three preceding Sundays to be marked by special events in dedication to the family. The first Sunday is marked by *Detinji* – the Day of the Child, *Materice* – Mothers Day is the second, and the third Sunday is marked by *Ocevi* – the Day of the Father.

On *Tucindan*, two days before

Christmas, a young pig is prepared for roasting in preparation for the Christmas meal. On the Day before Christmas – *Badnji Dan* – the family gathers for Lenten, the meal of Christmas Eve where the father leads the prayer and afterwards gifts are exchanged.

While most of the family is attending Christmas Day Mass the mother of the house stays home to bake a *Cesnica*, a special Christmas bread that has a coin baked into it. During *Mirbazenje* – the Christmas meal – the family gathers around the table where the father lights a candle set in a dish of wheat or grain. The father then says a prayer, and the *Cesnica* is passed from left to right while Christmas Hymns are sung and the *Cesnica* is broken. Whoever finds the coin will have a year full of good luck.

Christmas for Orthodox and Catholic alike is a time for friends and family to be together. The exchange of gifts is secondary. Large family feasts are held, and family and friends enjoy the company of one another. Just as with the Albanian Catholics of Kosovo, the Orthodox Serbs of Kosovo will take the time to share with family and close friends. As Americans, Christmas has become a holiday best known for decorations and gift giving. In Kosovo, the greatest gift for the people that celebrate either Christian or Islamic holidays is to be among family and friends.

In the past it was not odd to see an Albanian Muslim visit with his Serb Orthodox neighbor to wish him and his family a Merry Christmas, or to see an Albanian Roman Catholic visit a Turk Muslim and wish him or her well during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Traditional feasts that would follow these events were in the past attended by other ethnic and religious groups, particularly in mixed towns. The inter-ethnic relationships amongst the various ethnic groups have since changed.

There were very few marriages between Serbs and Albanians, and so it would be rare to come across this scenario in Kosovo. Inter-ethnic relations between the Serbs and Albanians still

remain very fractured following the conflict.

We will probably not see too many Albanians – regardless of religion – visiting with the Serbs, nor will we see the Serbs visit with the Albanians. It is very disheartening, but this is the reality of Kosovo today. The religious leaders of these communities will express their good wishes for all faiths, a small step in the right direction.

No matter what religion one belongs to, there is a tradition among many in Kosovo to exchange gifts on New Years day; many will even put up what we call Christmas trees in their homes and places of business.

Similar to what we see back home, all over Kosovo you will see people dressed up in various renditions of Santa Claus, or St. Nicholas, along with a host of other characters intended to bring a smile to the faces of children. Many will stand in line to get their picture taken while their parents wait. The costumes and array of characters won't be what you are used to seeing, but the smiling kids will be.

Regardless of the ethnic group or religion of the locals, they will be more than happy to wish you a Merry Christmas, or good wishes for whatever significant holiday you may be celebrating based on your religion. They will all express their appreciation to you for the sacrifices you are making away from your family to make Kosovo safer for their families.

We, as Americans, belong to various faiths – one of the founding principals of our great Nation was and remains freedom of religion. Let us take this holiday season we all share together as members of KFOR to say a special prayer for the people of Kosovo, that they may one day be able to celebrate together as human beings – not ethnic groups – finding within and among themselves peace. ☪



Drita Perezic is the Cultural Advisor for Task Force Falcon and can be reached at drita.perezic@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil

The March riots were a huge event while we were here. I wouldn't call it a highlight, but it was a very unique experience to be in the capacity that I found myself in. We were guarding the church in Gjilane to make sure that it wasn't vandalized. There were only four Civil Affairs personnel and two S-5 staff guarding the church from a mob of hundreds until the quick reaction force was able to come and take over for us. After the QRF came and relieved us, we actually had to go around to individual Serb houses to try and get them to safety. That was a very difficult time, because we had to bring them back after curfew to make sure they got their belongings. That was definitely a major event during our 14-month deployment here.

How did the March riots affect you?

They definitely pushed up our OPTEMPO. CA tends to always be busy anyway with going to different meetings and other tasks, but after the riots, we had to go to meetings all day trying to coordinate with everyone on what we were going to do to help the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). We had to make sure the IDPs in Shilovo had water and their sewage was working. We also had to check that they were okay and getting ahold of their necessary family members. We were working with them all the way through the night, bringing them back in to get their passports and IDs. The IDPs were often scared to come back and get those things, too, because it was a traumatic experience for them. The heightened OPTEMPO was so hectic that we were getting about three to four hours of sleep a night for three or four weeks after the riots occurred. Then, everything settled down some as things stabilized throughout Kosovo.

What made you decide to re-join the Army Reserve?

I noticed that it was one thing in my life that I totally missed. It was one thing that I really needed to do and I missed being in the whole seven years that I was out. Rejoining was one of the best decisions I've ever made.

What do you do in your civilian life?

I work at State Farm insurance. I am an auto claims adjuster. State Farm has been very loyal to me through all of this.

You mentioned that the Army was a missing piece in your life and that is why you rejoined. What does the Army do for you as a person that made you need to come back?

I think there are a couple of things. One is that it gives you adventure and experiences that you normally would never have in the civilian world. I mean, I would've never thought I'd come to a place like Kosovo. Also, with the passes to Bulgaria and Greece, it's been amazing in the past year all the places I've gone and the people I've met.

I also think that it makes me want to achieve more. In a lot of different ways, the Army challenges me in that. Physical training (PT) is a good example. Before coming here, PT was difficult. It is still difficult, but I've improved. Since I've been here, my Army Physical Fitness Test score has gone way up. There are more things in the military that I can say, "This is what I want to do." Then I set my goals to do just that. I haven't found anything like that in the civilian world yet. The Army motivates me and I am proud to serve my country.

Speaking of motivation and accomplishments, what has been your biggest accomplishment since you've been in the Army?

Everything has been a wonderful experience! I guess it's one general one that while I've been here in Kosovo I've gotten the experience I was looking for in CA. This is my first deployment and it was great to see how all the things work.

In the Soldier department, the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) was an experience that I got to take advantage of while I was here. Things turned out really well there--I was able to graduate from PLDC as the distinguished honor graduate. Also, my APFT score at PLDC was 292, which was my best ever.

I've had so many great experiences in the Army, though, that it is difficult to really choose one as my biggest accomplishment.

What do you do in your free time here in Kosovo?

I work out more. I do Tae-Bo. My team does, at a minimum, a four-mile run twice a week. I think that doing PT helps

relieve the stress for me and it clears out my head so I'm not thinking about being away from home or work that needs to be done.

I have been reading a lot of books while I've been here, too. I've also watched a whole lot of movies, which for me has been very different. I don't watch a lot of TV at home and I don't watch a lot of movies. I've quadrupled my DVD collection while I've been here.

Do you have any words of wisdom, any life mantra that you try to live by?

I think that usually when people first get here in Kosovo they say that they're stuck here and other complaints. We just all have to remember that we are here for the people in the society, not for ourselves. That's something that we should be proud to do because we are Soldiers. If you look at the difference that each and every individual Soldier is making, then you realize that it really is worth our time being here. Everyone should know that we are making a difference, no matter what our job here may be. If you are out in the community, you are in a position to directly affect the local populace, and if you are on the bases, then you provide much-needed support for the Soldiers that go outside the wire. ★

BRADLEY (Continued from Page 14)

aren't any people or cows just walking across the range there. One time we had to shut the range down for a funeral procession to come through. We also had to shut the range down because there was a heard of cattle moving through the range. Just things like that made it a different kind of training experience for us," added Pye.

Charlie Company can consider this trip to the range successful, added Pye. They were able to certify two more Bradley crews, everybody shot well, Soldiers were trained up on tasks that they normally wouldn't perform, and most importantly...

"It was a good change of pace for us to get out of the wire with the Bradleys, and it was great crew team building for us to get away for a couple of days and do what we normally do and fire some live rounds down range," said Pye. "It was a real good morale booster."

"The tradition has its roots in knighthood, where the awarding of gilt spurs symbolized entry into the ranks and fraternity of mounted warriors," said Staff Sgt. Lawrence Damas, C Troop, 2-107th Cavalry. "Usually, the squire aspiring to knighthood had to perform some task or deed on the battlefield or tournament to win their spurs. It was the spurs that symbolized that a man was a knight, not his sword, horse, or armor. No matter how financially destitute, a poor knight would part with everything else before his spurs."

The Army's modern spur ride tradition started with the active component horse-riding cavalry in 1942—the cavalry wanted to continue their tradition. So, for the cavalry in particular, several generals supported the spur ride idea of keeping the horse traditions alive, said Passeno.

At the day's end, all but two Soldiers walked away from the event having earned their spurs. Yet despite that, all who started the march completed it. Although they were weary, and their bodies sore and aching, these young men of TF Lancer showed that they have what it takes to carry on the traditions and reputation of the U.S. Army cavalry. And as they say, "If you ain't cav..."

HEALTH (Continued from Page 17)

your nose and exhale through your mouth. If you breathe in through your mouth, you don't get as much oxygen to the lungs.

Finally, take longer strides. You use about the same amount of energy to take short, choppy strides, but you will end up taking a lot more strides, which is just wasted energy.

Ultimately, you will find what works for you. But remember, dietary supplements can only augment your workout, not replace it. There's a reason why "frequency" is one of the components of physical fitness: practice makes perfect. So be your own drill sergeant, and get out there! 📧



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significantly less expensive.

In the same way that a good lens makes a digital camera, the easiest (and most expensive) way to get better pictures out of a printer is to use high quality paper. While it is true that inkjet printers can print on any paper, they are actually optimized to print on photo papers. The reason why photo papers work the way they do is that when ink is sprayed on plain paper, the ink is soaked up and diffused.

Think of when you use a paper towel to pick up a spill. The liquid diffuses and spreads. Photo papers have a specially made coating that keeps the ink in place, thus maintaining the richness of the color and sharpness of the picture.

Photo papers come in a variety of styles and qualities. It used to be easier to understand the differences when they were all rated on resolution (i.e. prints up to 1440 dpi). Now many paper companies will just call them "photo paper" or "premium" photo paper. You'll have to try them to really be able to judge for yourself.

You can also choose styles such as matte, semi-gloss and glossy. Matte paper is great behind glass and glossy looks great by itself. Semi-gloss is for those that don't like the reflectivity of glossy or aren't sure if they want to frame the photo or not.

Now it's time for the nasty hidden catch. Because so much of digital printmaking is tied to the computer technology that spawned it, it is imperative that you tell your computer when you've loaded the printer with photo paper. Virtually all printers have special drivers that you load on to your computer. Before printing photos, make sure to run the printing software that came with the printer and ensure that you've specified that you're using photo paper. Fail to do this and your prints simply will not look right. You'll have to look in your printer's manual for the exact way to accomplish this.

In choosing both papers and printers, you might want to give some thought as to how long you want these prints to be around. Back in the days of black and white film photography, the black and white silver-halide developing process was capable of creating prints that would outlast you and your children.

Inkjet prints aren't made of the same stuff. Most ink-jet prints are very short-term, particularly when you print them on plain or cheap papers.

There are some printers out there that allow you to use "archival inks." These inks last a lot longer on good papers, but expect to pay a premium for both the printer and the ink.

If you look around at various online retailers and brand name online stores you can usually find a refurbished mid-range printer that can use archival inks right around the \$100 mark. Just make sure the printer comes with ink. Most major outlets usually sell their systems with ink, but an increasing number of bargain-basement retailers are selling the printers without any – forcing the consumer to buy their first ink cartridges at a significant mark up.

Ultimately it comes down to how serious you are about photography. If you're a casual photographer, looking to print the occasional snapshot, the inexpensive (\$80-150) printers will do nicely. Remember though that many of the lower-priced models are not built to last very long (around 1,000 photos). If you are serious about photography, you might want to spend a little more. The money saved on ink and the time saved on processing will be worth it.

Luckily, the price/performance curve for digital print technology is such that buying today's mid-range (\$150-250) offerings will likely result in the consumer walking away with an excellent printer that will last around two or three years with regular usage. The prints you make on it will be frame quality. The best part is that by the time you decide that your original prints are getting a little dog eared or yellow – the mid-range printer you buy to replace your existing system is sure to be significantly better than the one you buy today. 📧

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Parting Shots



PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE